THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEATH, OF MISTRIS KATHERIN BRETTERGH, LATE wife of Master WILLIAM BRETTERGH, *of* Bretterghoult, *in the Countie of Lancaster* Gentleman.

With the manner of a bitter conflict ſhee had with Satan, and bleſſed conqueſt by CHRIST, *before her death, to the* great glory of God, and comfort *of all beholders.*

MICHA. 7. 8.

Reioyce not againſt me, O mine enemies: though I fall, I ſhall riſe againe: And when I ſit in darkeneſſe, the Lord ſhall be a light unto me.

PSALM. 37. 37.

Marke the upright man, and behold the iuſt: for the end of that man is peace.

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1641.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER,

grace and peace in IESVS CHRIST.

HEn *Achimaaz* the ſonne of *Zadoc* requeſted that he might be the meſſenger to bring *Dauid* word of *Abſolons* death, *Ioab* would not ſuffer him: *Thou ſhalt not* (ſaith he) *be the meſſenger to day, but thou ſhalt carry newes another time, but to day thou ſhalt carry none; for the Kings ſonne is dead.* He knew *Dauids* affection was ſuch, that the newes of his childes death would be moſt heavie to him, and the meſſenger himſelfe not welcome for his meſſage ſake. 2. Sam. 18. 19 20.

This is all our infirmitie, no tidings more grievous to us, then when wee heare of the death of thoſe whom wee loue. The Parent bewailes his Childe, the Husband his Wife, the Friend laments the death of his Friend, and wee thinke it the loſſe of another friend to depart with this our griefe. *Iacob* mourned for *Ioſeph* his ſonne, *that hee would not be comforted* of a long ſeaſon, but thought hee would weepe for him as long as he liued. When the *Amalekites* had burned *Ziklag*, and led away captiue the mens wiues and their children, *Dauid* and his company *wept, till they could weepe no more.* When *Lazarus* died, his ſiſters *Martha* and *Mary* were much diſcomforted for him. So heauy a thing wee ſee it is to bee ſeuered for a time from thoſe that are deare unto us. One onely thing there is, which is able in this caſe much to temper our affections; when we ſee our friend to die in the Lord; that is, in comfort of conſcience, and aſſurance of ſalvation through *Chriſt*. Gen. 37. 3. 1. Sa. 30. 4. Ioh. 11. 19

This bleſſed departure God giues to many, for diuers good purpoſes. Firſt, that the world may know that peace is the end of the juſt, and comfort in death is the portion of the righteous. Secondly, that his eternall truth in our holy profeſſion may appeare to bee able to comfort us not onely in our life, but in our death alſo, when all other comforts forſake us. Thirdly that our enemies may ſee, our faith is not in vaine. Fourthly, that the weake by their example may be encouraged to a holy life, when they ſee it bring with it ſo happy a death, and that they may be ſtrengthened againſt the feare of death, ſeeing it is alwayes comfortable to thoſe that lead a godly life. Fifthly, and finally, that the friends of the departed, by their heauenly departure, may be admoniſhed not to mourne ſo much for their death, as to rejoyce for their life, *and to thanke God, that ever it was their lot, in any degree to be ioyned or matched with ſo bleſſed ſeruants of God.*

This Gentlewoman, Mistresse *Katherine Brettergh* was one of this number: her life, as long as God continued it, was deere to those among whom she was, as the life of a friend might be. Her husband, friends, kinsfolks, brethren, sisters, and all the godly that knew her, enioyed a great blessing of God of her: and her death (no doubt) was grievous to her husband, as the death of a vertuous yokefellow.

This is the thing I thought with profit might bee presented to the view of other also that knew her not: for when I had for my owne priuate use, and the use of my friends faithfully collected (out of the fresh memories of those that were present, and eye-witnesses as well as my selfe) and set downe the manner of her sickenesse and death: I considered, that the knowledge thereof could not but bee welcome to all those that desire to dye the death of the righteous. And so the same causes that moued me to collect it, gaue mee also occasion to publish it. I remembred the saying of one, *That it is great pietie to set forth the vertues of the departed, if they haue excelled therein; yea it is a meanes to increase grace in our selues.* I thought so great mercie of God shewed to one among us, ought not to be forgotten, but should remaine to us and our children an example, to teach us how good God is to them that loue him, and to assure us that he will neuer forsake us; but, in like manner as he did her, helpe and comfort us, when wee shall by death be called unto him. I considered the ungodly and uncharitable tongues of the *Papists* abiding in our Countrey, who, since her death haue not ceased to giue it out, that she died despairing, and by her comfortlesse end, shewed that she professed a comfortlesse Religion. Wherein they bewray their malice and madnesse, and shew themselues of what generation they are, euen a people (saith *Ieremie*) *which bend their tongues like bowes for lies: and* (as *Dauid* saith) *make ready their arrowes to shoot at them which are upright in heart.* And lastly, when I remembred the censure giuen by our Sauiour Christ of the woman, that powred costly ointment on his head; a little before his Passion, though some of his disciples unjustly blamed her for the same, saying, *What needed this waste?* yet he himselfe did not only excuse her for that fact, saying, *she did it to bury him:* but also commanded, that *wheresoeuer the Gospell should bee preached throughout the world, there also that which shee had done should be spoken of, for a memoriall of her.* Euen so, seeing this vertuous Gentlewoman hath been unjustly accused by some popish persons, I thought it fit, that she should not onely be justly excused, but also that a true history of her holy life, and Christian death, should be now published in print, as a briefe history to be seene and read for a memoriall of her.

Nazianz. Mon. d. Basilis.

Ier. 9. 3 Psal. 11. 2.

Mat. 26. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

I had no other odours wherewith to embalme her, I am but the penman, the thing it selfe was her owne, wrought in her by the spirit of diuine providence, the which God grant that we may all imitate. Amen.

The holy Life and Christian Death of Mistris KATHERIN BRETTERGH.

THis Gentlewoman was borne in Cheshire the daughter of Iohn Breuen, of Breuenstapleford Esquire, well descended, and of an ancient House. Her education before her marriage was such, as became the profession of the Gospell, in godlinesse and purity of life and Religion, and well beseemed the house where shee was brought up. The Scriptures shee knew from a childe, and by reading thereof, gained such knowledge, that shee was able readily to apply them when occasion was offered, as we may see at the time of her death, and that so fitly, and effectually, that shee seemed to haue made them her dayly meditation. For the things of this world shee was moderate, and sober, and by her Christian life and death, shee might teach many Gentlewomen, how vaine the pleasures and fashions of this World are, and how farre vnable to bring that peace to a distressed heart, that the embracing of true Religion can. Staplefford.

Shee vsed not to gad abroad with wandring Dinah, to dancing greenes, markets, or publique assemblies; but rather with Hannah did chuse to tread vpon the dust of the Sanctuary, and walke in the waies of Sion; yea, with David rather to be a doorekeeper in the house of God than to haue societie with the wicked, or to dwell in the tents and tabernacles of the vngodly. The Sabbath day was alwaies deere and welcome to her, what time shee would not be without the Word preached, though many times she went farre for it. Her delight was still to consecrate it glorious to the Lord. And as it is said of Iosiah, his heart melted when he heard the Law; so may it be said of her, her heart was so tender, and full of compassion, that oftentimes she was seene to heare Sermons, reade, pray, and meditate with teares. Gen. 34. 1. 1 Sa. 1. 9 12. Psal. 84. 10. 2. Ki. 22. 19.

Shee made conscience of all sinne; yea, of the least sinne, such as worldlings count no sinne: shee neuer vsed to sweare oath great nor small; nor yet to abuse her tongue with vaine or vnseemely speeches; no not so much as a iest-lye, or immodest word; neither durst shee name the name of GOD, or take his titles in her mouth without great reuerence. In priuate speech where shee might speake with profit, shee did it so well, that her speeches might haue beene deliuered by a stronger vessell then her selfe: her words being so well seasoned, and proceeding from such a sanctified heart, did alwaies minister grace to the hearers.

Psal. 16. 3.

To reade, to pray, to sing, to meditate, was her daily exercise, and her chiefest delight was in the holy society of the Saints vpon earth (which I say not for any cause, but onely to shew the fountaine from whence her godly end flowed, and that the World may see some there be, which chuse rather to be ioyned with the people

Heb. 11. 25.

of God, than to enioy the pleasures of sinne for a season; and these I doubt not haue chosen the better part.) Finally, the precepts of the Lord were precious vnto her; for from her childehood she feared God, and walked before him: both knowledge and sanctification did ioyne in her, the fruits and effects whereof did appeare in her life, and was seene at her death, to the glory of God, and comfort of all beholders.

2. Tim. 3. 6. 7.

She was not like the simple Popish women of our dayes which are euer learning, and neuer able to come to the knowledge of the

Act. 17. 11. 12.

truth; but rather like the Noble men and women of Berea, which receiued the Word of God with readinesse, and were able to discerne of Paul and Silas preaching. But why doe I speake of Papish women, whose vnderstandings are darker then the darkenesse of Egypt: Let vs come and examine many other which seeme to detest Poperie, and aske them a reason of their faith; they can tell you a tale of their rutkes, and their pride, and their vanity: but for Religion, it is the least thing they regard, or seeke to know: which I speake not so much to solace my selfe in the sinnes and simplicitie of others, as earnestly desiring all Gentlewomen, that either knew this holy Saint of God, or hereafter shall heare of her, in stead of your glasses at home, wherein you prick and prune, and pinne your selues, to looke into this glasse before your eyes, that so her life, and death, may bee an example for you to follow.

When

When she was about twenty yeares old, (by the consent of her selfe and her friends) she was married to a young Lancashire Gentleman, Master William Brettergh of Bretterghoult neere Liuerpoole: one that likewise embraced Religion sincerely, and for the same indured many grieuances at the hands of Papists.

Two yeares and more she lined after she was married, and had issue onely one daughter: during which time, this couple lined together in such mutuall ioy and comfort, as well beseemed the children of God, which make profession of his truth. And although this Gentlewoman came from the inhabitants of Abraham, to dwell in Sodome, amidst the tents of Kedar, that is to say, among inhumane hands of brutish Papists, enduring many temporall grieuances from them, yet her knowledge, patience, milde inclination, and constancie for the truth was such, as that her husband was further builded vp in Religion by her meanes, and his face daily more and more hardened against the deuill, and all his plaguie agents: the Popish Recusants, Church Papists, prophane Atheists, and carnall Protestants, which swarmed together like Hornets in those parts.

Anna Brettergh.

Psal.120.5.

It is not vnknowne to Lancashire, what Horses and Cattell of her husbands were killed vpon his grounds in the night, most barbarously at two seuerall times by Seminary Priests, (no question) and Recusants that lurked thereabouts. And what a losse and hinderance it was vnto him, being all the stocke he had on his grounds to any purpose: This fell out not long after shee was married to him; yet this was so farre from dismaying her, or working such passions in her, as are common to her sex, that she rather * rejoyced then sorrowed; turning it into matter of praysing God, and submitting her selfe to his good prouidence. Oft shee would haue said, It is good that such things bee; but woe bee to them that doe them. It is good in God, thereby to chasten his children, and preuent some sinne, which he saw vs like to fall into. It is good in respect of Gods Church, that the weake may be confirmed in the truth, and that Papistry may be disgraced, when the World shall see such wickednesse flow from it. It is good in GOD, that so the wicked may bee without excuse at the day of iudgement, when their conscience shall tell them, that howsoeuer GOD suffers them to doe such villanie for some iust cause

* *Iohn Wrightington Esquier. Richard Orme. Raph Heaton, &c. and many moe.*

knowne

knowne to himselfe; yet they commit it only of malice and reuenge. Oftentimes also in these vexations, shee would haue said, the mercies of God are infinite, who doth not onely by his Word, but also by his Iustice, make vs fit for his Kingdome. Little doe our enemies know, what good by these things they doe vnto vs, and what wracke they bring to their owne Kingdome, while they let forth the wickednesse thereof. Many times she would pray that God would forgiue them, which had done them this hurt, and send them repentance: and she would call vpon her husband, that hee
Mat. 5. 44. would doe the like, and blesse them that cursed him. And for feare
Iob. 1 5. lest her husband should faile in that point through infirmity and weaknesse, as it is said of Iob, who offered sacrifice for his sonnes, least peradventure they should sinne, and blaspheme God in their hearts: so shee neuer ceased, but dayly prayed vnto the Lord to sanctifie her husbands thoughts, and direct his heart aright, onely to seeke Gods glory, without either desire of reuenge, or satisfying his owne affections. So humble was her spirit, so carefull to auoide and preuent sinne, both in her selfe and others: and so milde
Gen. 33. 3.4. of nature, that as Iacob with his mildnesse softned the malicious heart of Esau his brother: and Dauid by his kindenesse in the caue, changed the fury of Saul, into weeping and confession, that Dauid
1. Sam. 24 17.18 was more righteous than hee: so shee by her meekenesse, humility, and vnspotted carriage in the World, forced some of the aduersaries to religion, to speake well of her.

For her life, she was well reported of all that knew her. Pitifull and bountifull was shee to the poore, and slacked no opportunity to doe good wherein she could; but constantly held her course, and kept her times of praying, reading, and meditating, (wherein shee had plentifull gifts) and continually vsed the same at such times as were fitting for her estate, sex, and calling. As the exercises of Religion, as prayer and instruction in her family, she would not be wanting: besides priuate prayer, and meditation which she omitted not, but vsed dayly, both in her chamber, as also abroad secretly and solitarily in the Orchard, Garden, or Fields, as
Ge. 24. 63. Isacks manner was. In reading the Scriptures shee vsed such more to call to her selfe, eight Chapters a day at the least, and for the time which shee saw euill or idely spent, without doing some good, shee vsed to call the time of tentation. Many times also

shee

she would read some godly writer, or expositor of Scripture, or in the booke of Martyrs; and was seene to weepe most bitterly, when either she had read of that which touched her affections neere, or of the cruell Martyrdome, which the deere Children of God were put vnto, by the cruell and wicked tyrants of former dayes. Exo. 23 13. Psal. 16 4. Ephes. 5.3

For Popery, she saw it so grosse and foolish, that she would not once name it, except it were to argue against it, but neuer for it: so zealous was shee of Gods glory, and loued the truth so entirely, that shee would not once open her mouth to plead for Baal. Iudg. 6.31. 32 Eccles. 4. 25.28.

Sinne aboue all things was hatefull vnto her, for thereat shee would haue grieued, as well when shee had seene it in others, as in her selfe. One or two examples I cannot omit, wherein shee bewrayed a worthy spirit, sanctified by the Spirit of God, and prepared for all the assaults of Satan. On a time, as her husband and shee were riding toward the Church, he was angry with his man: Alas husband (quoth shee) I feare your heart is not right towards God, that can be thus angry for a trifle: And weeping shee said further, you must pray against this your affection, and alwayes bee sure your anger bee of God, for else how dare you appeare this day before his Minister? And offer up your prayers in the publike congregation of the Saints of God? Another time a Tenant of her husbands, being behind with his rent, shee desired him to beare yet with him a quarter of a yeare, which he did, and when the man brought his money, with teares shee said to her husband: I feare you doe not well to take it of him though it be your right, for I doubt he is not well able to pay it, and then you oppresse the poore. So great a compassion had shee of other mens wants, that all things being duely considered, and rightly weighed, methinks I may say of her, as Paul said of Timothie, I know none like minded.

Thus after she was married, she continued in the things shee had learned, and held her profession with such sincerity, that the common enemies to our religion (the very Papists) had nothing to say against her, but confessed her life was vnreproueable. And as for the godly that knew her, they alwayes acknowledged that modesty, and vertuous carriage in her, ioyned with knowledge and practise of all the duties of religion, that they had iust cause to report of her, as of a sound and faithfull professor of the Gospell. Phil. 2.20.

Two yeeres, and something more shee liued with her husband,

till about Whitsontide, it pleased God to send her that sickenesse
Anno Dom. 1601. whereof on Whitsunday 1601. she died.

Her sickenesse tooke her in the manner of a hot burning Ague, which made her according to the nature of such diseases, now and then to talke somewhat lively, and through the tempters subtiltie, which abused the infirmitie of her body to that end, as hee oftentimes vseth to doe in many, from idle words, to descend into a heauie conflict, with the infirmitie of her owne spirit; from the which yet the Lord presently and wonderfully deliuered her, giuing so ioyfull an issue to the tentation, that shee might well vse the words
Hai. 54 8. of the Prophet, as afterwards she did, For a moment O Lord thou diddest hide thy face from mee, for a little season, but with euerlasting mercy thou hadst compassion on me. On Saturday seuen-night
May 23. before Whitsunday, what time she sickned, she began to feele some little infirmity and weakenesse of faith, more than she had wont
May 25. to shew, but shee soone ouercame it. On Munday night it encreased vpon her, and the assault of the enemie began to be sharpe, and so continued till the next day at afternoone; what time God deliuered her, and sent her peace, and comfort of conscience, and so encreased the same in her continually till she died. The manner of her affliction was this:

First, the seuerity of Gods iustice, and the greatnesse of her
M. William Brettergh. Master Will. Fox. M. Edward Aspinwall. M. John Brettergh. Mistris Maud Brettergh. Mistris Scholastica Fox. William Woodward. Elizabeth Challoner. sinnes began to come into her minde, which much afflicted her, and shee would often speake of it. Then shee accused her selfe of pride, that she had delighted too much in her selfe, and her beauty. Afterwards she thought she had no faith, but was full of hypocrisie, and had not embraced religion so earnestly, nor glorified God so worthily (especially with her tongue, which oft she repeated) nor loued him so sincerely, as she ought to haue done. Sometime she would cast her Bible from her, and say: It was indeed the booke of life, but shee read the same unprofitably, and therefore feared it was become to her the booke of death. Sometimes she would say her sinnes had made her a prey to Satan; a spectacle to the world; a disgrace to religion; and a shame to her husband, kindred, and all true Christians: and here she would weepe bitterly. Sometime the originall corruption wherein she was borne, troubled her, and the sinnes of her parents, and the common parents of all, the eaters of the forbidden fruit: as if that had made her vnworthy of God,

and

and were then laid to her charge. Many times shee accused her selfe of impatience, bewailing the want of feeling Gods Spirit, and making doubt of her election, and such like infirmities. She wished that she had neuer been borne, or that she had beene made any other creature, rather than a woman. She cried out oftentimes, Woe woe, woe, &c. a weake, a wofull, a wretched, a forsaken woman, and such like pitifull complaints against her selfe, with teares continually trickling from her eyes. She complained of grieuous thirst, such as all the water in the sea could not quench (and yet when drinke was giuen her, sometimes refused it, sometimes tooke a very little of it:) sweat burst out vpon her exceedingly, and sometime her body burned extreamely. So it seemed the sorrowes of death hemm'd her in, and the griefes of hell laid hold upon her. Sometimes she was very dull in prayer, and once when shee would haue said, Leade vs not into temptation, she made a stop, saying, I may not pray; I may not pray (being interrupted, as she said by Satan) and so shewed much discomfort: howbeit she was not left till she could both pray, and make confession of her faith with speciall application to her selfe. Besides these firy darts of Satan, she was once or twice troubled with vaine speeches, as of her children, the killing of her husbands cattell, that shee thought she saw a fire by her, &c. But euery one saw that these things proceeded of weaknesse, emptinesse of her head, and want of sleepe, which her disease would not affoord her.

These fits, though they were for the time grieuous to her selfe, and discomfortable to her friends; yet were they neither long, nor continuall, but in the very middest of them would shee oftentimes giue testimony of her faith, striuing and fighting against her tentations. Many times when the standers by iudged her afflictions at the sharpest, would she call vpon God, lifting vp her eyes and hands to heauen, and desire him to giue her strength against her tentations. Many times with a cheerefull countenance shee would desire those that were by, not to faint, or to giue her ouer, but constantly to pray, and helpe her against the tempter. Once in the midst of her tentation, being demanded by Master William Fox: whether *Will. Fox.* she did beleeue the promises of God, or no? and whether she could pray? she answered: O that I could, I would willingly but hee will *Mark. 9.* not let me. Lord I beleeue, helpe my vnbeleefe: which she pronoun-

red with a still voyce. And when he replied, that if she had a desire to pray and beleeue, she did pray and beleeue, and that so effectually, that hell gates should not ouercome her, according to that of the
2Cor.8.12 Apostle: God accepteth it according to that a man hath, not according to that a man hath not: she was much comforted thereby.

William Brettergh. Once after a great conflict with Satan, she said: Satan reason not with me, I am but a weake woman, if thou haue any thing to say, say it to my Christ; he is my advocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall plead for me. Sometimes when shee was afflicted with the accusation of her sinnes, and want of feeling Gods mercy, she would with many a pittifull sob and much weeping, pray
Iohn Brettergh. to the Lord Iesus Christ, to helpe and comfort her a poore, woefull, distressed woman, and requested others to pray for her. And when shee was moued to make confession of her faith, she would doe it
Edward Aspinwall. oftentimes, saying the Apostles Creed, and concluding the same with words of application to her selfe. I beleeue the remission of (my) sinnes, the resurrection of (my) body, and eternall life (to me) Amen. And hauing done, shee would pray God to confirme her in that faith, euer concluding with the Lords prayer, as deuoutly and reuerently, as any that were present. A Christian friend who by his daily attendance on her, discharged the duty of a faithfull Christian, standing by told her that no tentation had befallen
William Woodward. her, but that which appertained to the childe of God, and that God is faithfull and true, and had promised to giue an issue with the tentation: whereas she expressed great comfort.

Master Edward Aspinwall, a faithfull professour of the truth, and a true Israelite, was much with her in the time of her sickneſſe,
Isai.40.1,2. 28,29,30. and ministred much heauenly instruction vnto her, and comforted her at all times with apt places of Scripture, meeting with her
31. Isai.41.8,9. 10.13.14. 17.18. Isai 42.1.8. 3.4.5.6.7. 8.13.14.15. temptations: and so put the sword of the spirit into her hand. He propounded to her the most plentifull comforts of God vnto his Church, in the 40, 41, 42, and 43. Chapters of Isaiah, vttered in such speeches and phrases, as might most fitly answere her discomforts. Also he directed her to consider the Passion and Prayer of
16 Isai.43.1.2. 5.15 Mat.11.28. our Sauiour Christ, for all his, Iohn 17. Matth. 26. Luke 22.23. But especially did he often inculcate that sweet inuitation of our Sauiour: Come vnto me all you that travell and be heauy laden, I will ease you. But the difficultie she had sometimes to apply these

generals

generals vnto her owne soule in particular, made the case more full of anguish to her selfe, and fearefull and lamentable to the standers by: Albeit shee acknowledged Gods Majestie, mercie, faithfulnesse and truth; yet still complained she of her owne weaknesse, and vnworthinesse, and could hardly appropriate each thing to her selfe.

To helpe her somewhat herein (for properly otherwise, it is the peculiar worke of the holy Spirit of God, to perswade the heart and soule of her particular interest in these generall promises) she was told, that the Almighty who was mercifull, as she had proued, and faithfull, as she confessed, intended all these mercies to as many as hee did call, and make promise to. And that hee called her shee must needes confesse, both because that then shee not onely her selfe read, but heard others reade those blessed words of God vnto her: and also for that in former times, she had beene touched with the loue of God, and that his truth: and had well profited in the detestation of sinne, and imitation of her Sauiour in a holy life. And for the proofe thereof, shee was wished to remember in former times her Baptisme, her frequenting of Sermons, and often receiuing the most comfortable repast of the holy Communion, her daily, and almost continuall exercise of reading, meditating, and praying, &c. Also hee assured her, that neither the present agony she was in, nor the speeches thenin that distresse, tending to the signification of despaire, extorted from her, were any iust causes, why either she, or any that heard her, should iudge fearefully of her, because all might see the fault was not in her will, as appeared by her prayers, confessions, plaints, sighs, teares, and grones to God for mercie, and full assurance in the blood of Christ; but in her iudgement, not able at that time to discerne the wayes of the Almighty: And therein (he told her) she was made conformable, not onely to many the holy Saints of God, Iob, Ieremy, David, and others more, but also to her head, our Lord and Sauiour Christ Iesus, of whom wee reade, that some haue cursed the day of their birth, and called for their end, and darkenesse to cover them: They haue beene as men without hope, and swallowed up in despaire: They haue cried, how the wrath of God hath tome them, and the terrors of the almighty haue fought against them: They haue had no peace in their soules, nor comfort in their consciences, their prayers

Iob 31. &c. Ier 20. 14. Iob 6 4.8.9. Iob 16.9. Lament. 3. &c. Psal. 6.3.

Psal.38.4. &c. Psal.71.7. Psal.77.1. 7. &c. Psal.51 5. Psal.102. 3.&c. Rom.7 24. Mat.27. 46 Mat.26. 38. Heb 5.7.

ers haue beene shut from God, their sinnes haue beene terrible vnto them, crying that their iniquities had gone ouer their heads, and were a burden too heavy for them to beare: And they haue thought themselues spectacles of shame and reproch, and as monsters unto men: They were grieved for the sinnes of their parents, and complained that they were desolate, forsaken, and most miserable and wretched in the world; yet for all this were they still the deare children of God, as you are this day. May (saith hee) I pray you consider, what torments God inflicted vpon his deare Sonne on the Crosse: did hee not cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He complained, that his soule was heavy unto death; yet was he heard in that which he feared, and God deliuered him. After this, hee read vnto her the 22 Psalme, wherein David complained partly of his owne, but principally of the most bitter anguish which our Saviour Christ endured, and suffered in body and soule, putting her in minde, that her case was not so bad as Davids, nor much vnlike our Saviours, who endured all that, and more for her; and therefore shee had no cause to feare, seeing Christ had obtained victory, and would vndoubtedly bee with her, deliuer her, and eternally glorifie her with himselfe for euermore; and so continually hee propounded to her such comfortable places of Scripture as might meet with her infirmities. This greatly refreshed her, and gaue her occasion many times to call vpon God, for encrease of grace, and deliuerance from her grieuous temptations: The which God of his accustomed goodnesse vouchsafed, on Tuesday, about three a clocke in the afternoone, what time shee felt her selfe in very good measure deliuered from all her former feares and afflictions. But on Saturday next after, which was the day before her death, shee was wholly released, and filled with such inward comfort, that it greatly affected vs that saw it:

May 26.

This is the summe of that temptation which shee had, wherein what can any man see that might giue iust occasion to report our Religion comfortlesse, or the Gentlewoman died despairing? This we are sure of, that to be without temptation is the greatest temptation: as also, that nothing befell her, which hath not befallen the holiest of the children of God. And shee that considered her owne corruption (which how great it is in the best of Gods Saints, I need not say) and bethought her selfe of the punish-

ment

ment due thereunto, if God in iustice should reward her; no marueil if she brake out sometime into heauie complaints. I make no question it was the worke of God in her, to suffer Satan to accuse her, and afflict her for her sinnes, that so shee might the better see them, and consider the hainousnesse of them, and before her departure repent of them, and betake her wholly to Christ for the sauing of her soule. And if it pleased God thus to make her possesse her sins before she died, let those which neuer yet knew the weight of their sinnes, be wise in time, and remember that hee shall neuer haue his sinne forgiuen, which first or last doth not vndergoe a holy despaire for it, and acknowledge nothing to remaine in himselfe, but matter of iudgement and condemnation: and comfort and eternall life to flow alone from Iesus Christ.

And as for those, which haue learned to scoffe at the terrors of Gods children, and to censure such as are at sometimes cast downe with feeling the anger of God against sinne, let them consider the blessed issue that God gaue to the troubles of this Gentlewoman, and let them acknowledge his worke in her. And if they will not doe this, but proceed to traduce the dead, then let them call to minde, those of the Popish crue, and persons of greater note among them, than this Gentlewoman was, which haue died most fearefully indeed. Cardinall Sadelot, Iacobus Latomus the Diuinity Reader at Louaine, Hofmester the Frier, Guarlacus, Bomelius, Crescentius the Cardinall, Stephen Gardiner Bishop of Winchester, and diuers the bloudy persecutors in Queene Maries time, and some of the Popes themselues, as namely, * Pope Sixtus Quintus of late yeeres; all which died most fearefully and miserably, and shewed manifest signes at their death, that their popish superstition was the condemnation of their soules. And if they will iudge of my religion by my death, let them acknowledge their religion is the doctrine of desperation, and that the truth and faith which was able to fill the heart and tongue of this blessed Gentlewoman at her death, with such heauenly comforts, is the doctrine of Christ, reuealed from heauen, that we might liue and dye in it.

Fox Acts and Mon. p. 1904. 61. pag. 1908.

** Francis the Monke, one of the ten popish persons conuerted in France, An. Dom. 1601. See Hasen Miller. historia Iesuitica, who sets downe certaine examples of the Iesuites to this purpose.*

From Tuesday, till Whitson-euen, her comfort still increased, and temptations banished away. She would then very cheerefully ioyne with the company in prayer, and singing Psalmes, as occasion

John Breuen Esquire. William Brettergh. Will. Fox. occasion offered, and performed all such duties, as was meet for her in that estate. One day, her brother Maister Iohn Breuen of Breuenstapleford came from his house in Cheshire to visit her, and after some kinde salutation passed betweene them, hee said vnto her: Sister, be not dismaied at your troubles, but remember what the Apostle saith, that judgement must begin at the house of God: To whom she answered, as one that was also very readie in the Scriptures, with the very next words following, True it is, and if it begin at us, and the righteous shall scarce be saved, where shall the sinners and ungodly appeare? After that, she prayed with him, and sung a Psalme with him, as one that receiued great comfort by him, and acknowledged in him, a heart set to seeke the things belonging to the Kingdome of Christ. During this time, in the night with such as waked with her, shee would pray and rehearse for her comfort many texts of Scripture, and namely, the 8. to the Romans, many times concluding and closing vp that she read, or repeated, with prayer, and most comfortable vses and applications thereof to her selfe, with shew of such ioy and comfort, that the hearers reioyced at it. When* she receiued any meate, shee prayed God not onely to sanctifie those creatures for her bodily sustenance, but also to fill her soule with the waters of life, often repeating that of the Reuelation, To him that thirsteth, will I giue of the waters of life freely.

John Brettergh. William Woodward. John Holland. Maud. Brettergh. Scholastica Fox.

1. Pet. 4. 17. 18.

*John Holland. William Brettergh. William Woodward. *Richard Orme.*

John Holland. William Brettergh. Will. Woodward. Will. Fox.

Reuel. 21. 6

One time she tooke her Bible in her hand, and ioyfully kissing it, and looking vp toward Heauen, shee said that of the Psalme: O Lord, it is good for mee, that I haue beene afflicted, that I may learne thy statutes: The law of thy mouth is better to mee than thousands of gold and siluer.

William Brettergh. Will. Fox.

Psal. 119. 71. 72.

Another time shee called her husband to her, and said: O Husband, beware of Papistry, keepe your selfe holy before the Lord: Yeeld not to the abomination of the wicked, lest they reioyce, and so you dishonour God, and destroy your owne soule. Againe shee said, Let my little Childe bee brought vp among the Children of God, and in the true feare and knowledge of his Maiesty; so shall I meete her in heauen, whom now I must leaue behind me on earth.

William Brettergh. Maud. Brettergh. William Brettergh.

Rom. 8. 15.

Againe, sometime she would pray with a low voyce to her selfe, and that saying of Paul, Wee haue not receiued the spirit of bondage to feare any more, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby wee

Will. Fox.

cry

cry Abba father, was much in her mouth: and the last words Abba father, she would double oftentimes ouer. She would sing to her selfe the last verse of the 13. Psalme.

I will give thankes unto the Lord, and praises to him sing:
Because he hath heard my request, and granted my wishing.

Finally, in these and such like exercises and meditations, did she spend the whole time of her sickenesse, after the Lord had once enlarged her heart from the tentations of Satan.

But vpon Saturday about eleuen of the clocke in the morning, the Lord disclosed himselfe in mercy, to her more plentifully, than euer before, and as I may say, hee dealt familiarly with his handmaid: for from that time, to her very death, which ensued the next day, the sterling of Satans temptations seemed quite to be banished from her; so that she made no shew of them, her thoughts were not occupied with the world, husband, childe, or any thing else, to our thinking; neither was her sickenesse troublesome to her, as before it had beene: but as one raised from death to life, or rauished in spirit, so seemed shee to vs that stood by: her countenance ioyfull: her tongue flowing with the praises of God: and her voyce as most heauenly musicke and melody of peace, sounding praise, and honour, and glory to God in a wonderfull manner, as followeth. May 30.

About eleuen of the clocke shee began to tremble and quake a little, and withall shee asked her husband if he would helpe her with prayer to God against the tempter, saying, Will you neither pray with me, nor bring some godly man that may put holy things into my minde, whereby I may bee able to resist Satan? hauing thus said, shee vttered these words: O Lord God of my saluation, helpe my weakenesse, plead thou my cause, O God of truth, for in thee doe I trust. After this, they prayed together, and shee answered Amen to euery petition. Then after this shee required him to reade some part of the Scripture: whereupon hee read vnto her the 8. to the Romans, the 91. Psalme, and the 17. of Iohn, the which as he read, and came to the fourth verse, I haue finished the worke which thou gauest me to doe, and now glorifie me: She desired him to pause a while, and then said, Blessed be thy name, O blessed Saviour, perfect the worke I humbly beseech thee which thou hast begun in me. When as he read the 9. verse, I pray not for *William Brettergh. Maud. Brettergh. Elizabeth Challener.*

for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine: She interrupted him againe, saying, O Lord Iesu, dost thou pray for me? O blessed and sweet Saviour, How wonderfull! how wonderfull! how wonderfull are thy mercies! Reade on said shee, the blessedst reading that I ever heard, the comfort whereof doth sweeten my soule. Then reading verse the 22. And the glorie which thou gavest mee, I have given them, that they may be one as we are one. With marvellous joy she uttered the words of David many times over, I confesse before the Lord his loving kindnesse, and his wonderfull workes before the sonnes of men: for hee hath satisfied my soule, and filled my hungry soule with goodnesse. When he came to the 24. verse, Father I will that they which thou hast given me, be with me, even where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given mee; Stay, said shee, and let mee meditate on the goodnesse of the Lord, for this is the sweetest saying that ever came to my soule: for now I perceive and feele the countenance of Christ my redeemer is turned towards me, and the bright-shining beames of his mercy is spread over me: Oh happy am I that ever I was borne to see this blessed day! Praise, O praise the Lord, for his mercies; for hee hath brought mee out of darkenesse, and the shadow of death; he hath delivered my soule from the snare of the hunter, and hath taken me out of the denne of Lions, even from the jawes of Leviathan, that piercing and crooked serpent, and hath set me in a place of rest, and sweet refreshing: Oh praise the Lord, O my soule, all that is within mee praise his holy name; my soule praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits, which forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thine infirmities: which hath redeemed thy life from the grave, and crowneth thee with mercy and compassion. This shee often repeated: And then againe remembring the 21. and 22. verses of the 17. of Iohn, shee said: O my sweet Saviour, shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with thy Father? and wilt thou glorifie mee with that glory which thou haddest with the Father before the world was? And doest thou so love me (which am but dust and ashes) to make me partaker of glory with Christ? what am I poore wretch, that thou art so mindefull of me? Oh how wonderfull! how wonderfull! how wonderfull is thy love! Oh thy love is unspeakeable, that hast dealt so graciously with mee! oh I feele thy

Psal. 107. 8,9.

Isai. 27. 1.

Psalm. 103 1,2,3,4.

Psal. 144. 3. Psal. 8. 4.

mercies

mercies, and oh that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought, and as I willingly would doe! oh that you all would helpe me to praise the holy one of Israel, the God of all consolations! **And thus for the space of fiue houres together at the least, shee continued praising and lauding the Lord, with such a gladsome and heauenly countenance, testifying such inward ioy, from the comfortable feeling of the mercies of God in her soule, and using such sweet sentences and sugred phrases of perfect and holy eloquence, as the truth thereof, if it could haue beene taken, were admirable, continuing so many houres together; some part whereof was this.**

O my Lord, oh my God, blessed bee thy name for evermore, which hast shewed me the path of life. Thou didst, O Lord, hide thy face from me for a little season, but with everlasting mercy, thou hast had compassion on me: And now blessed Lord thy comfortable presence is come, yea Lord, thou hast had respect unto thy handmaid and art come with fulnesse of joy, and abundance of consolations: O blessed be thy name, O Lord my God. **Then shee repeated part of the 16. Psalme, saying:** The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, wherefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoyceth: Thou wilt shew mee the path of life: In thy presence is fulnesse of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore: Oh that I could therefore praise the Lord, as he is worthy to be praised! I will sing to the Lord, I will sing to the praise of the God of Israel: come, come (saith shee) and helpe me, O helpe me to praise the Lord. **And with that shee began to sing the third Psalme, and continued to the end of the Psalme, as perfectly, and with as sweet a voyce, as euer she had before in her health; and concluded with the 49. verse of the 106. Psalme.**

Isai. 54. 8.

Psalm. 16. 4 9. 11.

Iudg. 5. 3.

The Lord the God of Israel, be blest for evermore:
Let all the people say Amen, praise ye the Lord therefore.

And after this shee said, O praise the Lord, for he hath filled mee with joy and gladnesse of heart, and brought me from the gates of hell, and of death: **repeating that of the 16. Psalme,** My line is fallen unto me in a pleasant place: yea I haue a faire heritage, for the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: The place where I now am, is sweet and pleasant: oh how pleasant is the sweet perfume of the place where I lye! It is sweeter than Aarons composed perfume.

Psal. 16. 6.

Exo. 30. 23.

of principall spices: how comfortable is the sweetnesse I feele! it is
Reuel. 8.4 like that odour that proceeds from the golden censer, that delights my soule. The taste is precious: doe you not feele it? Oh so sweet it is! yea sweeter than myrrh, the hony or the hony combe. Let me therefore sing againe, and againe unto my Lord, and my God. Then she did sing the 19 Psalme, beginning at the 7. verse, How perfect is the Law of God, &c. and so on to the end of the same. And after that spirituall reioycing, in singing of Psalmes, shee then prayed unto God faithfully, and prayed the Lord againe ioyfully. And being still full of these, and such like heauenly consolations, she did sing againe most heartily, unto the praise of God the 136. Psalme, Praise ye the Lord for he is good, for his mercy indureth for euer: &c. In which Psalme, for his mercy endureth for
M. William Fox. euer, is 26. times repeated. A Christian friend comming in at the same time, which was about six of the clocke in the euening, maruelling to see her exceeding ioyes, and heauenly harmonie, wherein she continued with such words and phrases, that were so spirituall, prayed for the continuance of the same unto the end: whereupon she then burst out, relating further of her ioyes, saying: Oh the ioyes! the ioyes! the ioyes! that I feele in my soule! oh they be wonderfull! they be wonderfull! they be wonderfull!
William Brettergh. W. Fox. William Woodw. rd. And after that, shee prayed for encrease of faith, and that God would strengthen her against tentations, with continuall craving of remission of sinnes, euer meditating of heauenly matters, as by her sudden and often breaking out into heauenly speeches, and phrases, did appeare: for the same euening shee lying still and
Will. Fox. silent for a while, one prayed her to remember the Lord Jesus, and that shee would in her heart, pray for constancie in her ioyfull course; whereupon shee answered with a delightsome and cheerefull countenance, and comfortable voyce: Oh (said shee) so I doe,
Psa. 27. 1, 3 for the Lord is my light, and my saluation, whom then shall I feare? Though an host pitch against me, yet my heart shall not be afraid,
Deut. 4. 31 for the Lord hath said, I will not leaue thee nor forsake thee. Indeed, I should verily haue fainted, but that I beleeved to see the
Psal. 27. 13 goodnesse of the Lord in the land of the liuing. And now my heart
Psal. 108. 1 is ready, my heart is ready and prepared, yea it panteth after thee
Psal. 42. 1, 2 O God: as the Hart braieth after the rivers of water, so panteth my soule after thee O God: my soule thirsteth for God, euen for the

liuing

living God. When Lord, when shall I come and appeare before thy presence? &c. Saying then further, Lord, sith it hath pleased thee to prepare my heart, whether to life or death, thy will be done, dispose of me to thine owne glory, I am thine Lord, worke thy blessed pleasure and good will upon me. And after this shee fell into a short slumber, and awaking said, as the Spouse said unto Christ in the Canticles, Oh come kisse me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy loue is better than wine; Oh how sweet the kisses of my Saviour be? Then one said unto her, alluding to that place of S. Iohn, Reuel. 3. 8. and praying that the Lord would annoint her with the eye-saline of his grace, that shee might see and behold his glory. To whom she answered, Mine eyes are opened, mine eyes are opened, though for a while they were closed up and shut; yet now I thanke my God, mine eyes are opened and I doe feele and see the everliving mercies of my Christ: saying then further as it is in the 27. Psalme. Thou saidst, seeke my face; my heart answered to thee, O Lord, I will seeke thy face. O hide not therefore thy face from me, nor cast thy seruant away in displeasure, thou hast beene my succour, leaue me not, nor forsake me, O God of my saluation. And being willed to commit her soule into the hands of Christ, she said: O Lord Iesus, thou hast redeemed me, pleade thou my cause, for into thy hands alone doe I commit my spirit, O thou God of truth. And then feeling more top to abound, one praysing God with her for his great mercies shewed toward her, shee further said: I giue thee thanks O Father, Lord of heauen and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, and men of understanding, and hast opened them unto me thy poore handmaid, which am but dust and ashes. O how mercifull and marvellous gracious art thou unto me! yea Lord, I feele thy mercy, and I am assured of thy loue, and so certaine am I thereof, as thou art the God of truth, euen so sure doe I know my selfe to bee thine, O Lord my God; and this my soule knoweth right well, and this my soule knoweth right well: which speech of her assurance she often repeated. Presently after this sitting vp in her chaire, she sung the fourth Psalme; and then being laid downe againe in her bed, she confidently spake these words: I am sure that my redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him, at the last day, whom I shall see, and mine eye shall behold: and though after my skin, wormes destroy this body, yet shall I see

William Brettergh.

Cant. 1. 1.

Will. Fox.

Psal. 27. 8, 9.

William Brettergh. Psal. 31. 5.

William Woodward. Mat. 11. 25

Will. Fox.

Psal. 139. 14.

William Brettergh. Iob 19. 25. 26, 27

God in my flesh with these Eyes, and none other.

Then came in to see her toward euening, Master William Harrison the Preacher, praysing God for her continuance, in that her ioyfull and most happy course: and perswading her to an holy perseuerance in the same, shee thanked him, and desired him to reioyce in Christ with her, and to praise God for his mercies to her, and said. O Master Harrison, my soule hath beene compassed about with terrors of death, feare within, and feare without, the sorrowes of hell were upon mee, knots and knorres were upon my soule, (which twice or thrice shee repeated) and a roaring wildernesse of woe was within me; but blessed, blessed, blessed bee the Lord my God, who hath not left me comfortlesse, but like a good shepheard, hath he brought mee into a place of rest, euen to the sweet running waters of life, that flow out of the Sanctuary of God, and he hath lead mee into the greene pastures, where I am fed, and exceedingly comforted: yea, hee hath restored my soule, and lead me into the plaine and easie paths of righteousnesse. The way that now I goe in, is a sweet and easie way, strowed with flowers, and as a fine sandie way; yea, it is more easie and soft than the sand, for I goe and tread upon wheat, euen upon the finest flower of wheate: Oh blessed be the Lord; O blessed be the Lord, that hath thus comforted me, and hath brought me now to a place, more sweet unto mee, than the Garden of Eden. Oh the joy! the joy! the delightsome joy that I feele! Oh how wonderfull, how wonderfull, how wonderfull is this joy! O praise the Lord for his mercies, and for this joy, which my soule feeleth full well, praise his name for evermore. And these praises of God, shee sounded forth, like Davids harmonie, being indued with Davids spirit, to the praise of the eternall and mercifull God, continuing all night in such like prayers and prayses to God, except some small time, that shee was silent and quiet. Master Harrison prayed twice with her that euening, as also in the morning (being Whitsunday.) After hee had prayed once with her, going then toward his publike charge, shee sent for him, to pray once more with her before he went, which he did; to the ioy and gladnesse of heart, both of her, and all that were present: and so hee tooke leaue of her, and departed.

M. William Harrison.
William Brettergh.
Will. Fox.
M. John Brettergh.
William Woodward.
Psalm. 23. 2. 3.
Psal. 147. 14.
William Brettergh.
Will. Woodward.
M. Edward Aspinwall.
Will. Fox.
M. William Brettergh.

Another faithfull man or two came presently in the morning, and diuers other well affected, who were with her at the time of her

her death, and often prayed with her that forenoone, shee still abounding in spirituall comforts and consolations: sometimes as one awaking out of sleepe, she would say, the Lord was her keeper, and deliverer. Againe, one saying vnto her, the Lord blesse you: Yea, (said she) and the Lord Iesus blesse us all. And so seeming to sleepe a little while, and awaking againe shee said: Lord I trust in thee, haue mercy upon me, giue me strength to praise thee: defend and preserue me in the houre of tentation, and lay no more upon mee, than thou wilt enable me to beare. Afterwards being asked, if shee would haue them ioyne in prayer together againe with her. O yes (said shee) for Christs sake I desire it: saying thus to her selfe: Heare O Lord, and haue mercy upon me: Lord, bee thou my helper: thou hast loosed my sacke, and girded me with gladnesse: therefore will I praise thee, O Lord my God: I will give thanks to thee for evermore. With that, all that were present did ioyne in prayer with her, and in conclusion using the Lords prayer, which she said with them, to thine is thy kingdome; her strength then being gone, her tongue failed her, and so shee lay silent for a while, every one iudging her then to be neere death, her strength and speech failing her: yet after a while lifting vp her eyes with a sweet countenance and still voyce, said: My warfare is accomplished, and my iniquities are pardoned. Lord, whom haue I in Heauen but thee? and I haue none in earth but thee: my flesh faileth, and my heart also, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. He that preserueth Iacob, and defendeth his Israel, he is my God, and will guide me unto death: guide mee O Lord my God, and suffer me not to faint, but keepe my soule in safetie. And with that shee presently fell asleepe in the Lord, passing away in peace, without any motion of body at all; and so yeelded vp the Ghost, a sweet Sabbaths sacrifice about foure of the clocke in the afternoone, on Whitsunday, being the last of May, 1601.

Iohn Brettergh. William Woodward. Mistris Maud Brettergh. Mistris Scholastica Fox. Elizabeth Challoner. and divers moe.

Psalm 30. 10, 11, 12.

Isai. 40. 2. Psalm. 73. 25. 26.

This was the death of that vertuous Gentlewoman, happily dying in the Lord, and reaping the benefit of a holy profession: wherein wee cannot but acknowledge and reuerence the mercie of God, who in our greatest infirmitie makes his grace to shine most clearely. A sure testimony of the truth of our profession, seruing to incourage vs therein, and to moue vs to a godly life. It must needs

FINIS.